

# LICCIANA'S DAY OF DAYS

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PHOTOS BY ANTHONY J. COSTELLO

Sept. 15, 1974 — 7 a.m. — The church bells send a cascade of sound bouncing off the mountains and resounding through the valleys to shatter the dawn.

Shortly after, the village street cleaner makes his way along Via Garibaldi, performing his daily chore even on Sunday morning. For this is to be the big day. The biggest day in the history of the old town of Licciana Nardi in the Italian province of Tuscany. Don Giuseppe is back and with him Il Vescovo Hogan from faraway Rochester, N.Y., U.S.A.

Don Giuseppe is known in the States as Father Joseph Beatini, pastor of St. Francis Xavier Church in Rochester. Il Vescovo, of course, is our own Bishop Joseph L. Hogan. They and a contingent of some 30 diocesans traveled to the mountain village of Licciana, 300 miles or more north of Rome, to celebrate Father Beatini's 25th anniversary as a priest.

8:30 a.m. — The village begins to buzz. It is still early, the parade will not begin until 10:30 and the Mass at 11. Workmen are busy putting up strings of lights in the village square. Five men arrive on horseback from the mountains and already the Banda di Santo Stefano Magra has gathered.

9 a.m. — The leader of the band raises his baton. A slight pause as music is readied, then the strains of the march number Nicoletta announces that the festivities are under way.

The band marches into narrow streets of the borgo (the section of town dating from medieval days). More and more of the townspeople gather, some now striding along behind the band. At the church, local religious dignitaries form a procession and it is off to the home of Alcide Baldassini, a



Father Joseph Beatini busses cousin Alfredo following Jubilee Mass.

Beatini cousin, where Bishop Hogan and Father Beatini are staying. The bishop actually has already celebrated the 8 a.m. Mass but he will preside at the jubilee Mass.

10:30 a.m. — The procession now has its full complement and begins back toward the church. Members of Father Beatini's Class of 1949 and other Rochester priests are in the line — Fathers Edward E. Steinkirchner, Patrick Grace (just out of the U.S. Navy and working at a Divine Word Seminary in Nemi, near Rome), Lawrence (Pat) Ward (an Air Force colonel), Biaggio Cortello (of West Haven, Conn.), Charles Bennett, James Marvin, Msgr. William Roche, Msgr. Richard K. Burns, and, of course, Il Vescovo Hogan.

Our diocese in full swing in the borgo. Members of Father Marvyn's tour — Betty and Al Hagreen, Margaret and Allan Brooks, Mary and Ed Marvin, Beverly and Gus Marvin, Irene and Joe Liss, Pinky Smith, Mary Favasuli, Frank Gunn, Francis Burke, Katy Marvin and Mary Reese.

Marching along with the Beatinis, the Marianellis, the Bellis, the Sandronis, the Riccis.

All Don Giuseppe's cousins for a day — about 600 in number.

11 a.m. — The church. As the official party enters, the band outside plays As the Saints Go Marching In. Inside, the strains of this venerable number mingle with the choir's singing of the Italian version of Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow. The pastor, Don Savino, has the church resplendent in fresh daisies. There is the nostalgic odor of incense. The choir is excellent and the Kyrie Eleison is projected beautifully.

The church is filled to its 200 capacity and the people are thrilled as Bishop Hogan delivers the homily in Italian. He introduces Father Beatini's five classmates — Fathers Bennett, Cortello, Grace, Steinkirchner and Ward (Father Beatini later will refer to them as his five brothers, giving them at least temporary status higher than cousin).

Joining the congregation are Leonitta and Jim Colella, Beatini cousins from Seneca Falls, N.Y. Already, Nancy and Churck Beatini, Carrie and Joe Sandroni represent that town.

The bishop blesses the congregation. Then it is outside again. Hugs and kisses. Old friendships rekindled and new ones made in the shadow of the church.

Noon — The hotel already has the meal under way. From the church, it is a short trip. But it is a long meal — antipasto, tortellini soup, ravioli, chicken, veal, rabbit, lamb, salad, more roast meat, eggplant, cream tortes, champagne, cookies, cake,

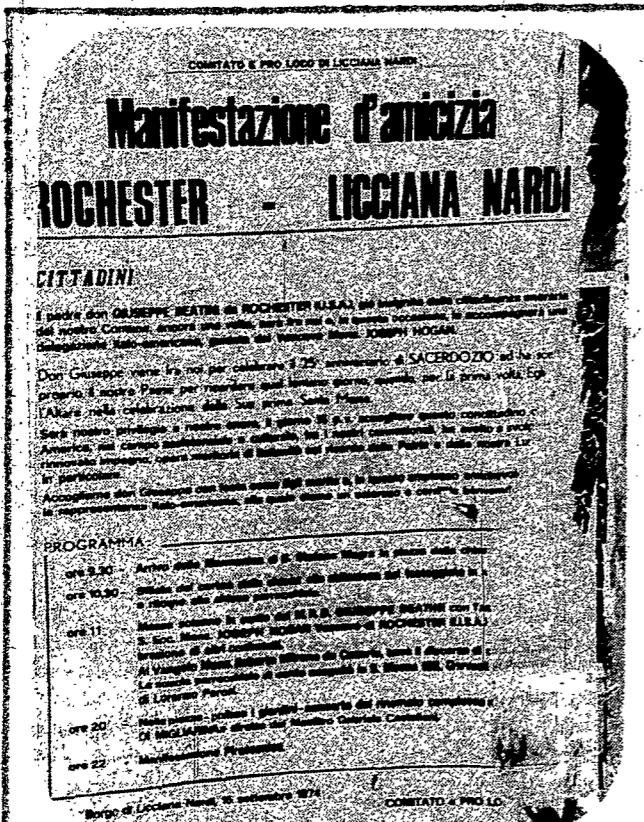
cheese, fruits. All the while wine, which truly is drunk like water.

Civic officials, mayor, judges are there. Alpine songs and God Bless America as Italians and Americans trade vocal gifts. Don Giuseppe solos on Non Ti Scordar di Me (don't forget me) and there is hardly a dry eye in the place. People to people at its best. Artist Gastone Rossini and his wife Fiorella arrive from Florence. They had met Father Beatini in Rochester when Rossini exhibited his work last year.

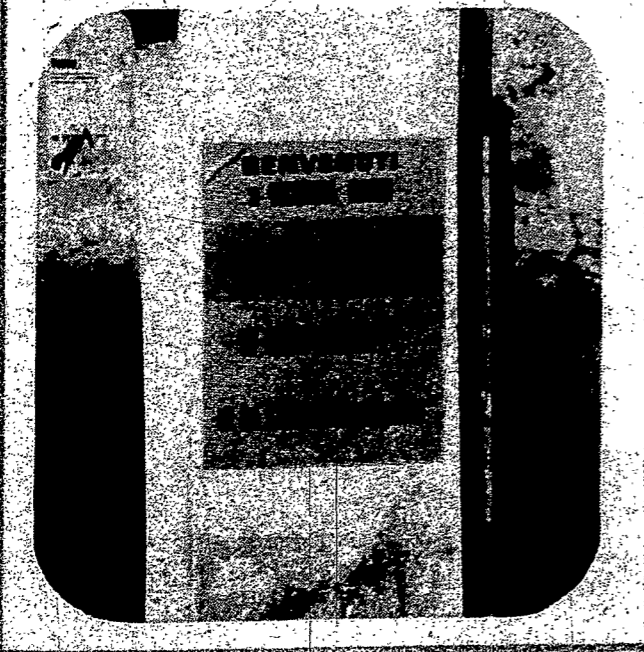
After three hours of celebrating, the Marvyn tour goes on a short bus ride through the countryside. Others put their feet up and rest. For the festa will continue.

8 p.m. — The village square. The crowd gathers under the strung lights as I Ragazzi di Migliarina, well known in Northern Italy from radio and television appearance, entertain Bishop Hogan, Father Beatini and his party. The songs represent many sections of Italy and the youngsters, like everyone in Italy, it seems, are beautiful singers. Two delightful hours.

10 p.m. — The fireworks begin and it is the signal that the festivities are drawing to a close. A night of nights to end a day of days. No one there, from either side of the water, will ever forget it.



Licciana was filled with posters announcing the grand events. Above poster lists the day's activities and one below is a welcome to all. Il Vescovo is our Bishop Hogan and Don Giuseppe is Father Beatini.



Father Beatini and Liccianese cousins.